

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5655

As of February 17, 2005

Title: An act relating to teaching Washington's tribal history, culture, and government in the common schools.

Brief Description: Requiring that Washington's tribal history be taught in the common schools.

Sponsors: Senators Schmidt, Rasmussen, Eide, Jacobsen, Poulsen, Kline and Kohl-Welles.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education: 2/14/05.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING, K-12 & HIGHER EDUCATION

Staff: Ingrid Mungia (786-7423)

Background: Currently, Washington's high school graduation requirements include a minimum of one-half credit of course work in Washington State history and government. Courses designed to meet this requirement are encouraged to include information on the culture, history, and government of the American Indians.

Summary of Bill: Requires school district to incorporate the culture, history, and government of federally-recognized Indian tribes into its curriculum for each grade level in which Washington State and United States history is taught. A school district with all or a portion of a tribal reservation within its boundaries, must teach the history and culture of the tribe or tribes. A school district with no portion of a tribal reservation within its boundaries, must teach the history and culture of the federally-recognized Indian tribe or tribes whose traditional lands and territories lie within a one hundred-mile radius of the district boundaries. The Superintendent of Public Instruction must assist school districts in determining the location of tribal reservations and traditional lands and territories.

The history and culture curricula must be approved by the district and the tribe, and school districts must collaborate with the tribe to develop and implement the required curricula. A teacher, in order to teach a tribe's curriculum, must have completed the tribe's certification program, or be approved by the respective tribe whose curriculum is to be taught.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: Tribal students are eager to study their own background and share with others students. Want Indian culture and history in public schools to share with everyone.

Indian history should be taught in local schools. This is not a radical idea because we already have black history month and Latino recognition. The intent of the bill is crucial and critical. Appreciate the collaborative process in the bill between school districts and tribes. Students want to learn more about their own and others heritage. It is important for non-Native students to learn about their history and native American history.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Representative McCoy; Christi Perkins, Washington State Special Education Coalition; Gordon Neilson, Skokomish Tribe; Anna-Maria Wilson, North Thurston Public Schools; Jeniva Klement, Nisqually Tribe; Marissa Daniels, Lorilee Choke, student at Yelm Extension School; Evan Wright, student of Nisqually School; Ralph Munro, former Secretary of State; George Adams, Language Education Specialist; Lucinda Young, WEA; Jessica Kerrigan, Josephine Choke, Samira McDonald, Derek Gary, student.